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Creek or Crick?

Jim Hoy

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Untitled Plein Air
Zak Barnes

CREEK OR CRICK?

What do you call a running stream of water that's smaller than a river but larger than a brook? Many would say it's a creek (rhymes with peek), but others would call it a crick (rhymes with pick). Then there are those, myself included, who use both terms. If in conjunction with a name, I usually say "creek," as in Durachen Creek or Cole Creek, but if I'm talking about a location, it's often "crick," as in "There's not too much water in the crick these days," or "I saw the cows headed down to the crick." Which term is correct? My desk dictionary says that a "creek" is a stream of water and that a "crick" is a painful muscle spasm in the neck. But my unabridged dictionary gives "crick" as a dialect variant of "creek." Now that I think about it, when I'm in a conversation I don't even notice how it's pronounced. So say it however you want to.

— *Jim Hoy*